



YOU ARE IN BISON & RATTLESNAKE COUNTRY

Please take extra caution:

- In May and June when bison cows are very protective of their newborn calves.
- During the July and August breeding season when males can be more aggressive.
- When cycling; cyclists can quickly and quietly invade a bison's personal space.
- When hiking with pets; dogs must be under control at all times as they may provoke a bison attack.

Make bison aware of your presence by talking and whistling. Startled bison can respond aggressively. If you see one bison, look around for others because they tend to travel in groups.

If bison display any of the following:

- Shaking the head
- Pawing
- Short charges or running toward you
- Loud snorting
- Raising the tail

... you are too close- RETREAT!

Aussi disponible en français



Rule of Thumb

Hold your fist straight out in front of you. Cover the bison (standing sideways) with your thumb. If the bison is totally covered, you are about 100m away, a safe distance. If not, back off promptly.



Plains Bison at Grasslands National Park

In December 2005, after a 120-year absence, Plains Bison were re-introduced back to the park. They came from Elk Island National Park's well-established herd and are a vital part of the Grasslands ecosystem.

Bison are wild animals and should be respected

These safety tips will help you enjoy your time at Grasslands National Park.

In Your Car

If you encounter bison along Ecotour Road:

- Drive slowly towards them and they will move out of your way.
- Do not honk, become impatient or drive aggressively at them.
- Attacks on vehicles are rare but can happen.
- Do not leave your vehicle. This will ensure a safe encounter, and the bison may remain in the area for the next visitor to see.



James Page

On Foot or Horseback

- Always be aware of your surroundings, so you see the bison before they see you.
- When approaching coulee rims or blind corners, always proceed slowly in case a bison is just out-of-sight.
- Startled bison will often run away, then stop and stare back at you. Detour around any bison you encounter.
- Do not approach closer than 100 metres, and never try to chase or scare bison away.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY

Cell phone coverage is unavailable in most areas

EMERGENCY: CALL 911





Grasslands National Park Snakes

Grasslands National Park is home to five species of snakes: **Bull Snake, Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer, Plains Garter Snake, Plains Hog-nosed Snake, and the Prairie Rattlesnake.** The Prairie Rattlesnake is the only venomous snake in the park, and your chances of being bitten by one are less than the chances of being struck by lightning.

Identification

The only snake that can be easily confused with the Prairie Rattlesnake is the Bull Snake. Both can exceed a metre in length, and both can range in color from light to dark brown.

Rattlesnakes

- Side blotches are much less distinct than on Bull Snakes.
- Two light coloured lines behind and below the eyes.
- Poisonous snakes have vertical pupils, like a cat.
- Triangular head - distinct narrowing behind the jaws.
- A "pit" or small hole between nostrils and eyes on either side of head.
- Rattle on the end of body creates unmistakable dry, high pitched "rattle" sound.



Wendy Michael

Bull Snakes

- Distinct gold and dark brown pattern with clearly edged dark blotches in a line along the back, and another line of spots along either side.
- Non-venomous snakes have round pupils like a dog.
- Narrow heads that grade smoothly into the rest of their body (like all other GNP snakes).
- No "pit" or small hole between nostrils and eyes.



Dave Fier



James Page

Visiting Rattlesnake Country

All snakes are very shy and timid. They will always first rely upon their camouflage to stay hidden from you. Visitors to rattlesnake country can take a few simple precautions to prevent unexpected encounters.

- Watch the ground in front of you - try to see the snake before you get too close.
- Do not step on or over rocks or shrubs. Snakes often lie up against rocks and can be startled if you suddenly step over them.
- Wear boots or shoes that cover your ankles, and long, loose fitting pants that reach to your ankles.
- If you are going near a snake hibernaculum, wear snake gaiters.
- Don't put your hands and feet into crevices, holes or rock ledges. These are the places snakes seek to find shelter.
- **DO NOT TOUCH** or attempt to handle **any** of the snakes you encounter.
- Hike in groups of at least three. This way, if someone should be bitten, one person can go for help while the other remains with the person who has been bitten.

By following these simple precautions, you will be at very little risk should you meet a rattlesnake in Grasslands National Park. If you do meet one, enjoy the experience from a **safe distance of at least four metres.**

Aussi disponible en Français

If you are bitten

Rattlesnakes will usually (but not always), rattle when you are too close. If you inadvertently get too close and a snake strikes:

- Back away immediately. Sit down in a safe area, relax and examine the bitten area.
- **Call 911.**
- Stay calm.
- Keep the bitten area below heart level, and if possible keep it immobilized to reduce the venom spread.
- Avoid running or fast walking.
- **Never** apply a tourniquet, cut the wound or suck out the venom - these actions only make the injury worse.
- Record the time of the strike. Every half hour draw a line around the bruised area as it progresses in size.
- Remove all jewellery or other restrictive items, as the limb may swell.
- The nearest anti-venom is at the Cypress Regional Hospital in Swift Current. If possible phone the emergency room number 1-306-778-9412 and provide them with as much information as possible.
- Do not wait for symptoms to appear - seek medical attention immediately!

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